

New Testament Greek
3. Elements of Language Study

Date: 070923G

Duration: 0:00:00

Let's begin by reading John 1:1–5 aloud in Greek. TR Page 169.

1:1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. 3 πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν, ὃ γέγονεν. 4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 5 καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

We will begin by going through the exercises from Chapter 2.

[Go through exercises.]

Now, please turn to page 41 in Machen 2nd Ed., 20 in 1st Ed.

This is Chapter 3, and it begins to get us into really learning Greek.

Just from reading from John 1, we all can see that Greek is not just

English words using Greek characters. It is a different language.

I am curious, did anyone read Chapter 3 before coming to class? If so, did you understand it?

I'm going to begin to read, just one word at a time, and I want you to raise your hand as soon you hear a word or phrase that you do not understand. Hold your hand up high until I say to put it back down. Okay, here we go.

[Read one word at a time. Hands will go up quickly.]

Okay, that is just about everybody.

Now, obviously, the point of teaching is to help you understand.

But, if you do not even understand the terminology the book takes for granted, then the book isn't really of much use.

All my way through school, clear on up through college, no class of English or any other language ever took the trouble of defining the terms that are used just to teach languages.

Oh, sure, parts of speech were defined, but not always very well!

So, can everyone even name the eight parts of speech you learned in your English lessons in school? Nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections.

I looked this up in an encyclopedia, to make sure I had them right, and their order was noun, verb, adjective, adverb, interjection, preposition, conjunction, and pronoun.

Right away, I ask, why that order? A noun, pronoun, and adjective are all related, and can be part of the subject of a sentence.

Then, verbs and adverbs go together, because an adverb is used to give more specific information about the verb.

Prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections have distinct uses that you learn when you study English grammar. Do you remember diagramming sentences? Oh, what fun that was, right?

But, I'm saying, to help us understand how the pieces of the puzzle of any language fit together, we need to organize them in some logical way, that we can see the relationships.

There is no point plunging into Present Active Indicative if we don't understand how that fits into the larger picture of grammar.

Just to define the terms, in isolation, we might be able to memorize the definitions, but that does not give us a sense of how they fit in with the rest of the pieces of the grammar puzzle.

Now, one thing the 2nd Ed. has that is not found in the 1st Ed. is the glossary on pages 330 to 346. It defines terms, but that is all.

What I'm saying we need is an outline that puts the terms together, in an organized way, so that we can picture the relationships in our minds.

The hand-out I gave you that is stapled in the middle can be folded to form a little booklet.

It is an outline of terms, and it not only defines them; it shows how all the different pieces of the language puzzle fit together.

For today, we will go over the outline quickly, not that you have to learn all the definitions, but I will explain them, and you will be able to see how they all fit together.

Then, you can refer to this outline as we move through the course, to keep in mind how everything fits together.

[Go through the booklet.]

Your assignment for this week is to make a picture of this outline.

Ideas: standard tree outline; container and contents; map.

I'd like to see some of them next time. It will help you understand.

Collateral: The challenge of communication in any language.

Cannot assume other person understands words the same as you do, even though you might define them the same.

Dog: one person thinks of a cute puppy or lap dog; another, of a retriever or hound, a useful companion, guard, or worker; or, some people just don't really like dogs, so they bring to their minds something unpleasant or negative.

When Revelation says, "without are dogs," it isn't necessarily the animal, but people likened to dogs, and it isn't positive!

Words can have double meanings, or be used in unusual ways.

Varied backgrounds and upbringing make communication hard. When you hear around the grapevine something you supposedly said in a message, that you certainly never meant, you'll see! Any time you teach a principle from God's Word, some will think of it as a law, and you'll be accused of legalism. Any time you teach one side of an issue, because you don't have time to say everything in one message, someone will assume you never heard of the other side, and try to set you straight. One way to illustrate this is with a puzzle, which I will go through with you quickly, just to show you how words can be used in different ways that you might not have imagined before. Go through several clues of a cryptic crossword on overhead. And, that is just within the confines of the English language. Translating one language into another is yet a greater challenge! There is more to it than learning their word for house or water! Minds and entire ways of thinking vary according to language. Yagua math, mostly lost now, as they have learned new language. It might be said that Greek was the ideal language in which to write the New Testament, because no other ancient language comes as close to the way people in the Christian world think today. I say the Christian world, meaning the world that was influenced by the gospel from the first century onward, because other nations have completely different ways of thinking, very strange to us. In fact, when we understand this, we can quickly see that in reality, the way we think is a result of the New Testament being written in Greek! As the gospel spread, it also spread a way of thinking that was different from that of other languages. Both the gospel message, and ways of thinking characteristic of the language in which it was written, were spread at the same time throughout the Roman empire; basically, the western world. So, it can be observed, the west has much more in common than a lot of other countries. Oh, there are enough differences, but the things in common far outweigh the differences. Our little grammar outline is one step in helping us see where most modern, western languages share common characteristics. Anyone who has studied both Hebrew and Greek can immediately see the differences of how things are expressed. One example is past and future: in the Hebrew mind, past is before and future is after! That is just how they picture it. If you heard them talk about it, you'd think they were walking backwards! That's because we associate before with ahead, as "the path before us," and they associate before with behind. Before is behind!

You can't see the future, and their picture is the sense in which the future comes after the present, so, again, to hear them speak of it, we would think they were walking backwards; because to us, we associate after with behind. That is just the Hebrew mind. To the Hebrew, behind you is before, and ahead of you is after. But, our thinking is typically Greek; so, if you think of the future as a path ahead of you, the goal ahead that you have not reached yet, that is a Greek way of thinking. To the Greek, behind is after you, and before is ahead of you. The path before you is the path ahead. The path behind is after. Now, it isn't totally a hard and fast rule. The Greek can look at it in the Hebrew sense; but, only the Greek can express it so clearly that you cannot make a mistake which sense is meant. What I am saying only scratches the surface of a very deep subject. The point is, if communication in English is challenging, it is quite a lot harder still to translate a different language into English. The one advantage with Greek is, we think basically the same way as the Greek language expresses things: precise and logical. The English language is actually less precise than the Greek, due to the non-Greek influences that are part of our heritage. So, the outline we have gone through today shows what languages share in common, specifically English and Greek, and I trust by having this reference available, it will help you in your studies.